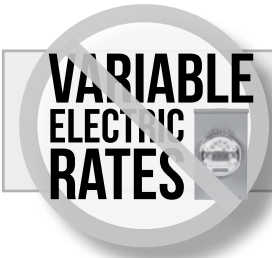


PROTECTING CONSUMERS

Transparency and Fairness for Electricity Pricing

Many consumers report being enticed into signing a variable-rate electricity contract with a low “teaser” rate, only to see their bills increase significantly without warning. Customers deserve stable, predictable rates, whether obtained through standard offer service or from competitive offers in the private supplier marketplace. That is why I have been fighting for the past three years to ban variable rates, and I’m glad legislation was passed this year to do exactly that.

Senate Bill 573 will **ban variable-rate residential electric contracts** and ensure fixed-rate contracts and provide consumers with stability and security.



Beginning this July, every residential electric customer’s monthly bill must display his or her rate for the coming month. **To file a consumer complaint, contact PURA: 1-800-382-4586** or **www.ct.gov/pura**

From your State Senator
Mae Flexer

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Legislative Update *from* State Senator Mae Flexer

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STANDING UP FOR VETERANS

Tax Cut for Retired Veterans

As part of the state budget, the legislature approved a tax cut for military veterans which **provides a 100 percent exemption from the state income tax for federally taxable military retirement pay**. State law used to provide for only a 50 percent exemption to retired members of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Army and Air National Guard.

Women Veterans’ Program

I was proud to author and lead unanimous passage of the Connecticut Women Veterans’ Program, which will require the state Department of Veterans’ Affairs to **establish a program that will reach out to women veterans to improve their awareness of federal and state veterans’ benefits and services**. The bill also calls for an assessment of women veterans’ needs for benefits and services, as well as a review of programs and initiatives currently available to women veterans in our state.



Supporting Veterans on Campus

I wrote a new law requiring an examination of ways to **make Connecticut’s OASIS (Operation Academic Support for Incoming Service Members) centers for veterans more effective**. There are about 6,000 veterans enrolled in Connecticut colleges and universities; veterans use the OASIS centers to meet, study, relax and talk and to gather information on veterans benefits, the GI Bill, tuition waivers, disability benefits and more.

Restored Funding for Honor Guards

The legislature **restored funding in the state budget for Connecticut Honor Guard detachments at veterans’ funerals**. Funding was increased by \$400,000 over the governor’s proposed budget, ensuring representation of the Honor Guard detachments. This change reflects the state’s commitment to honoring the service of our veterans and paying proper respect when they are laid to rest.

PROTECTING SENIORS

Supporting Family Caregivers

Nearly 500,000 Connecticut residents act as caregivers, and many of them feel unprepared to provide the technical care needed to keep their loved ones healthy. My family has personal experience providing in-home care, which is why I wrote and led passage of the CARE Act, a bipartisan bill that will **help to ensure that caregivers are given follow-up care instructions** when a patient is discharged from the hospital and reduce costly hospital readmissions.



The CARE Act requires hospitals to:

- Provide each patient with the opportunity to designate a caregiver during the patient’s admission to the hospital;
- Make reasonable attempts to notify the designated caregiver if the patient is to be discharged back to his or her home; and
- Provide the caregiver with instructions on how to perform medication management, wound care, injections or other medical tasks for the patient when the patient returns home.

Enhanced Protections Against Abuse and Neglect of Seniors

This year, I authored enhanced protections for seniors to guard against abuse and neglect. Senate Bill 1005 gives abused, neglected, exploited, or abandoned seniors the ability to sue perpetrators of these crimes. The legislation also enables victims of financial abuse to protect their assets from those who are taking advantage of them and requires that financial institutions train their staff to detect potential fraud, exploitation and financial abuse of seniors.



PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE

Regional Emergency Dispatch Center

I have fought for the past two years to restore local dispatch to our state police barracks in Eastern Connecticut. I am pleased to report that the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection has completed a comprehensive review of consolidated dispatch centers and **outlined a plan to reinstate dispatch and call-taking functions at all troops in the Western and Eastern Districts starting July 1, 2015**. The rollout of this plan will coincide with the installation of the state’s new next-generation 9-1-1 system, with a projected completion date of this fall.